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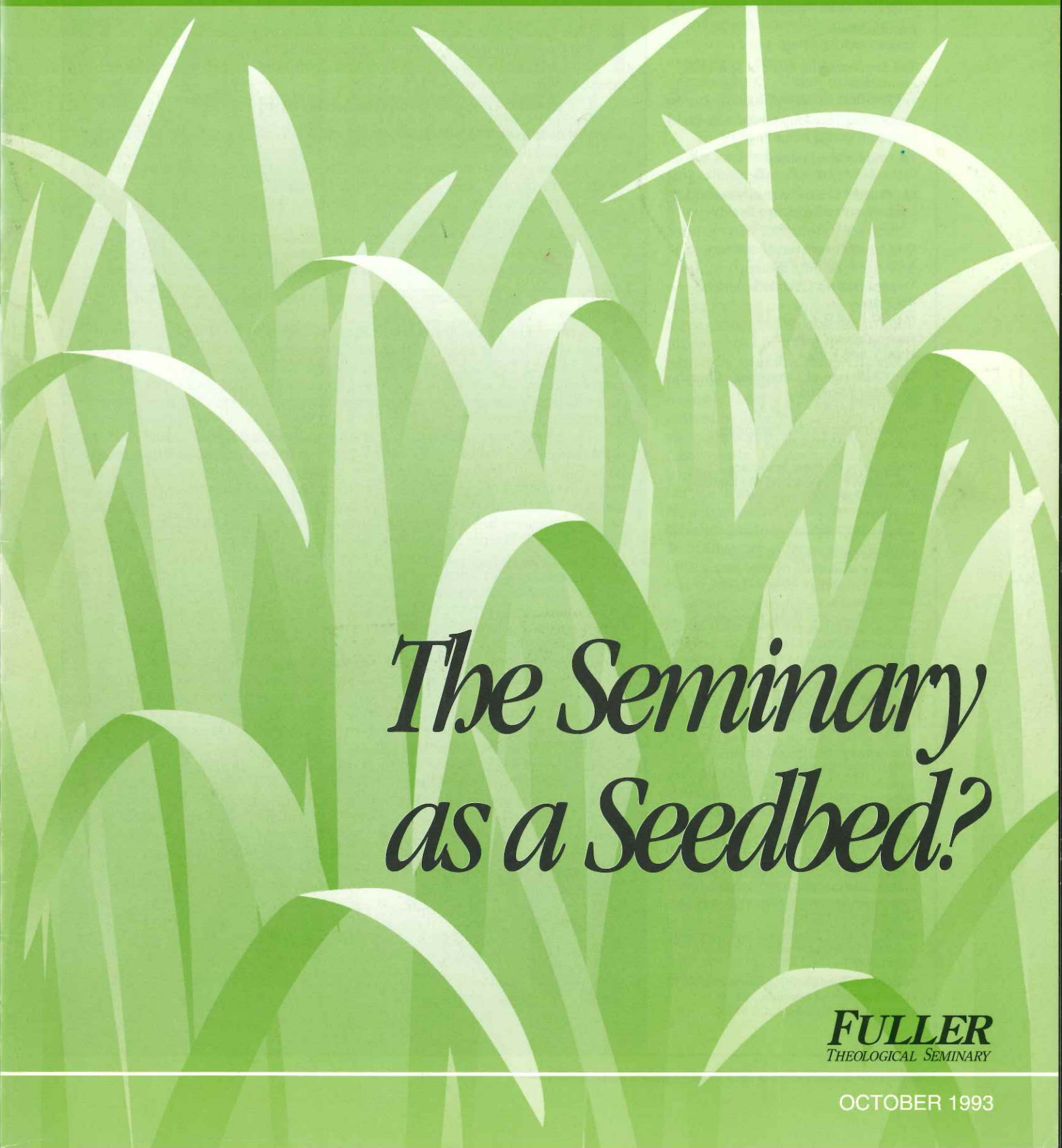
THEOLOGY, NEWS AND NOTES



The Seminary as a Seedbed?

FULLER
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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FORWARD

The Seminary as a Seedbed for the Church?

BY ROBERT P. MEYE

Is the seminary a *seedbed?* So says the dictionary. There is in my somewhat aged copy of the unabridged dictionary(*Webster's Third New International Dictionary)*, the very first definition of the five definitions noted, to wit:

1. a plot where plants for transplantation are raised from seed.

Of course, a complete report on the first definition must also include the italicized abbreviation which lies beyond the full stop: "obs." The abbreviation, of course, stands for "obsolete." And the second definition given, "seminarian," also bears the note "obsolete."

It is with the third entry's *second* definition that we come to a description of the seminary as we know it:

3. an educational institution; specif.: a. an academy, now, often a private, secondary school. b. an institution for the training of candidates for the priesthood or ministry; a theological school;—called also *theological seminary.*

Of course, in the present setting we may read "Fuller Theological Seminary"!

In the midst of these words defining the seminary, it is well to note the etymological background of the word. Ultimately, as the dictionary reports, it goes back to the Latin "*semin, seminis,* seed." Here etymology gives a nice perspective on the first definition! Food for thought here—and often ingested in narratives of the seminary in history. However, just now I turn in another direction.

The etymology and the dictionary meanings of the word "seminary" raise a question. The question has its "bite" in the particular fact that the term "seminary" historically came into being at a time when it was very much the garden of the church — the then dominant Roman Catholic Church. The church provided the ground for the seedbed, planted the seed, and transplanted the seedling back into its own churchly field. The question for us now is this: *To what extent is the word "seminary" still meaningful today?* I raise the question here in reference to Protestant seminaries, among which Fuller Theological Seminary is included.

The question arises from a series of simple, often made, observations: 1. For all the good intentions on all sides, the church is often only loosely connected to the seminary; the seminary (even a denominational seminary) does not really seem to be a garden or a seedbed *of the church.* 2. Today's seminarian is often neither in the "seed" nor in the "seedling" stage, but may be a third-career adult (a mature plant!) with years of ministerial experience already logged in. 3. There may be no "transplanting" involved; many seminarians are educated "on location."

Thus, my question, here variously restated: How is the word "seminary" still meaningful? To what extent do the words "seed" and "seedbed" still help us understand the seminary and the seminarian in the context of the church? Is the word "school" (as in "divinity school" or "theological school") a more accurate description of what was once called a "seminary"—or should the word "seminary" be retained for various reasons? The question does not require an answer here. Rather, we can let the provocative metaphor embraced in the word "seminary" generate reflection which can be important and fruitful for churches and seminaries alike. The seed has been planted. ■

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Introduction

BY ROBERT CAHILL

This issue of *Theology, News and Notes* deals with the relationship between the seminary and the church. Emeritus dean of the School of Theology, Robert Meye, insisted from the beginning that there be collaboration between pastors and professors in the design of this issue, hence the use of co-integrators. From the pastoral side I would like to comment on two matters from my own experience of the impact of theological education. First, some remarks on the continuing experience of Fuller Seminary (not to be confused with "continuing education" opportunities offered). Second, a word about academic and professional growth found in pastoral ministry as the result of the theological enterprise. Finally, a very brief preview about the content and design of this issue of *Theology, News and Notes*

The inveterate New Testament scholar James Denney once observed that the earliest Christians did not *remember* Jesus. His living presence was too real! I would like to apply Denney's bold Christological insight to my experience of Fuller Seminary. There is a true sense in which my own encounter with Fuller professors and their areas of scholarship continues to function dynamically in my pastoral ministry. And I am confident that scores of graduates in each of the three schools which comprise Fuller Theological Seminary could say the same.

It is not a romantic postulate but a fact that the seminary, the faculty, and their various theological disciplines, has been a kind of *living presence* in my life and ministry. Unlike the mysterious Melchizedek, theological education has a beginning, but like him it should have no end! My formal introduction began in 1958. Names, faces, ideas, and theological convictions shared thirty-five years ago still come to me with the power of a "personal presence." How often I have thought, What would Dr. Carnell think of this argument? Even as I write these words I ask, Would this pass muster with Paul Jewett? Dr. Bromiley gave us a choice of topics for a term paper and the

"The earliest Christians did not remember *Jesus. His living presence was too real!"*

"second choice" still makes me think and file reading notes! Professor Roddy got my attention for life as he warned us about the difference between a lecture and a sermon.

Beyond individual emphases and impressions left through egocentricities of faculty members, there was, and still is, the sense of the vital relationship between the seminary and my thirty-plus years of pastoral work. Over my study desk I have printed the Puritan aphorism "Thou art a minister of the Word—mind thy business." Fuller continues to be the Great Collaborator in my ministry of that Word. The symbiotic relationship is rich. Today's faculty, administrators, library, and bookstore staff all help along the way. I have noticed in talking to pastors in my age group, representing several different denominations and not all Fuller graduates, that many speak about their seminary days as a long-ago-and-far-away experience. Many speak desparagingly. When asked about when I attended seminary, I feel like saying, I'm still at it!

In 1958 I asked Dr. Wilbur Smith for his advice about subscribing to a theology journal or biblical quarterly. He suggested *Interpretation*, published by Union Seminary in Richmond, Virginia. I have made it my business to keep up theologically through the use of this journal. The accumulative indices are in easy reach. I have attempted to acquire a solid theological library and to organize it for maximal use. Thanks to the seminary's ongoing ministry, I have avoided prejudice caused by labeling, a practice all too common in the Christian community. I have refused to confine myself to "safe" authors. Let me illustrate from the areas of New Testament and Christology. Geerhardus Vos, in his study *The Self-Disclosure of Jesus,* was critical of Bousset and J. Theiss. I quickly put them down as "unsafe." Reading and summer school study with Edward Schweizer helped me to find real riches in both scholars. It was George Ladd who introduced me to Edward Schweizer. I am grateful! Karl Barth often speaks of theology as a joyful science. I can affirm the joy of pastoral and academic discipline due in a large part to Fuller Seminary.

Hard work and purposeful effort is required if a graduate is to keep at it year after year. James Denney and Alexander Whyte agree that the one unpardonable sin of student and pastor is laziness! In a moving passage Whyte quickens my conscience with the reminder that every minister must give an account to

him "who did not redeem us in his sleep"!

The major articles in this issue cover such topics as the future shape of theological endeavor in light of societal changes (Robert Banks); the high cost of commitment in achieving and maintaining symbiotic relationships between seminary and church (Robert Meye); the "danger" of seminary as it relates to words and the Word (Eugene Peterson); and keeping the Bible in the center of realities not to be discounted in theological education (Robert Johnston).

Two sets of vignettes find professors, on and off the campus, offering suggestions about integration of subjects (Nancey Murphy); the team use of teaching churches and seminaries in places like Seattle, Washington (Tim Dearborn); and the nearly impossible task of teaching evangelism among the already converted (Eddie Gibbs). Finally, three pastors reflect on the value of their experience of Fuller as it relates to their ongoing ministries: Covenant pastor (Charles Barker); Baptist pastor and adjunct (Ken Fong); and Presbyterian preacher (Henry Greene). ■

ROBERT CAHILL cointegrator for this issue of *Theology, News and Notes,* graduated from Fuller Theological Seminary in 1962, served as a pastor of American Baptist churches for thirty years, and is now a minister-at-large in Salem, Oregon.

The Seminary as a Place of Spiritual Formation

BY EUGENE H. PETERSON

The most frequently voiced disappointment by the men and women who enter seminary has to do with *spirituality*. They commonly enter seminary motivated by a commitment to God and a desire to serve their Lord in some form of ministry, and then find that they are being either distracted or deflected from that intention at every turn.

They find themselves immersed in Chalcedonian controversies, they find themselves staying up late at night memorizing Greek paradigms, they wake up in the morning, rubbing their eyes, puzzled over hairsplitting distinctions between *homoousian* and *homoiousian*.

"The seminary is not a congenial place to nurture spirituality."

This is not what they had bargained on. Their professors seem far more interested in their spelling than in their spirituality. They find themselves spending far more time on paradigms than in prayer.

I grew up surrounded by warnings regarding the dangers of seminaries. The sectarian tradition in which I was reared had no use for learning. Thinking about God got you into nothing but trouble. *Only believe*. And praise! The brain was more or less bypassed as the Holy Spirit filled the praising heart with blessings.

Seminaries were regarded as the graveyard of spirituality. Seminaries were where men and women lost their faith. The doomsday warnings that today's youth get regarding drugs and "safe sex" for me were all posted on *seminaries*. The brain, if used to carry out basic everyday functions (like counting out change and reading the comic strips), was considered fairly harmless. But if it presumed to think about God and his ways, to ask hard questions and read big books, it was almost certain to develop a malignancy which would spread rapidly to the soul. Intellectual cancer was the highest known cause of death to the soul. Many of the warnings had stories attached to them. I knew some of the people in those stories and had no reason to doubt the validity of the warnings. The only prudent thing to do was avoid seminaries at all possible costs. Bible schools were acceptable, for one had to learn something or other, but *seminaries* with their intellectual intensities and spiritual laissez-faire were too dangerous to risk a vocation.

But despite the warnings and the stories, I went to seminary. Not without considerable trepidation, but I went. And now, forty years later, having not only *gone* to one seminary but having taught at half a dozen others, I have found no evidence that any of the warnings were wrong — or even exaggerated. Seminary education *is* dangerous — and many have lost their faith in its classrooms and libraries. Many others, though not taken out in a coffin, have been left crippled or stunted in ways either subtle or conspicuous.

All of us, pastors and professors alike, who have attended seminaries, returned to them from time to time, and continue to send men and women under our spiritual care to them, know this. It is no secret. None of us has come through unscathed.

By and large, a seminary is not a congenial place in which to nurture spirituality — a life of prayer, a community of love, a risky faith. A seminary is a place of learning, learning about God to be sure, but still *learning*. Ever since the Enlightenment–split between the heart and the head in the seventeenth century, schools have not been easy allies in a life of worship, prayer, and the love of God. Talking *about* God is almost the antithesis of talking *to* God. Even though the same words are used in the talk, they are not the same thing at all.

But if the seminary is not a congenial place for spiritual formation, neither is any other place I have inhabited. I haven't found it any better in the congregation, home, retreat center, or ocean beach. I haven't yet attempted the monastery (they wouldn't let me bring my wife), but I am good friends with some who have, and they report similar conditions.

Not only that, but I keep running across holy men and women in seminaries in the guise of professors and students and staff. They are no *more* frequent, but certainly no *less*, than in other places I have lived and done my work. If the seminary itself is not holy ground, it does not prevent bushes from breaking into flame from time to time and evoking holy responses. "Midian Theological Seminary" would not be an inaccurate generic name for our schools of theology.

Spirituality, it seems, is not a function of place or curricula. I spent my formative work years in my father's butcher shop, carving pork loins and grinding hamburger. That is where I learned much of the spirituality that I have been working out ever since. It has been supplemented, of course — challenged, corrected, redirected, developed, sidetracked, abandoned, and then taken up again. But that, and my mother's prayers and presence, provided the raw material that the Holy Spirit has been working with ever since. It took me a long time to recognize that rather simple and obvious fact. But once I did, I quit expecting either *persons* or *institutions* to provide for me what was already sitting in my backyard.

"Seminary does not provide the materials for spiritual formation, but a particular condition in which the formation takes place."

And from the moment of that recognition, I was freed from a lot of grumbling and complaining in the wilderness.

It is the same for all of us. Seminary does not provide the *materials* for spiritual formation, but a particular *condition* in which the formation takes place for a relatively brief period of time.

The condition is characterized by *words* — words spoken, words written, words read. Books, containers for words, are everywhere. Classrooms, designed for the audition of words, are the primary architecture. Computers, a technology for the recording and retrieval of words, are ubiquitous. *Seminary is a world of words.*

Recognizing this is essential in dealing with matters of spiritual formation in the seminary. For the main question is not, as it so often is put, What can we do to make the seminary a better place for spiritual formation? but rather, How can we enter into and embrace the unique condition that constitutes the seminary in such a way that we grow up into the maturity of Christ Jesus?

The distinctiveness of the particular *word-world* comprised by the seminary has to do with the "Word made flesh," the *Logos* which Jesus Christ incarnated. *Logos* is God speaking the world into being, Jesus crucified and raised for our salvation, the Holy Spirit shaping a holy life in us. *Logos* is the word spoken personally by a personal God in such a way that persons can respond to and participate in it. The personal response is formed through a life of obedience and prayer.

Because *Logos* is absolutely foundational and pivotal to what the world is and how it functions, the nature and meaning of history, and everything we are and do, it is extremely important to get it right. Seminary is a school designed to teach us to get it right — to read the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures accurately and appropriately (exegesis and hermeneutics), to develop a theological habit of thinking and inquiry (God, not my culture or my ego, as subject), and to acquire a feel for the ways the human community continually misapprehends the *Logos* of God — whether willfully or ignorantly — occasionally hears and understands, and sometimes believes and obeys (church history), and gives due consideration to the complexities of the personal, social, and political situations in which this

Logos is spoken (ethics). And more!

But always it is the *Logos*, the Word of God, that determines the subject matter. This is what the seminary is charged to do: honor and understand, teach and consider this *Logos*. It is no easy task, and requires an entire faculty of specialists in various areas to carry it out.

And now comes the hard part. For as much as the seminary is formed to honor and preserve and explicate the *Logos*, the words that are used are not the *Logos* itself, but *logoi* about the *Logos*, human words about the divine Word. And because there are so many of them, so many *logoi*, they sometimes threaten to upstage the *Logos* itself. And not only threaten, they often *do* upstage it. And because these words about the Word are not life-giving — not creating, not saving, not sanctifying — in the same fundamental and original way that the Word is, those of us who both speak and hear them get overwhelmed, burdened by the very words (and those who speak and write them) that we thought were going to be our salvation.

Calls go out that the seminary must become more intentional about spirituality and spiritual formation. Requests are made, sometimes as demands, sometimes as suggestions, that spirituality be integrated into the curricula with a seriousness equivalent to Hebrew exegesis and historical theology. However the requests are made, whether stridently or gently, they never seem to amount to much. A course added here and there, a committee formed to report back in a few months, a student questionnaire distributed. But all these and other attempts at solution or reform fail to take into account the nature of a seminary, the *conditions*, and the ways of spirituality.

The feelings of betrayal and frustration are understandable, but there is no remedy. Or at least no outside, imposed remedy. Rather, the remedy is inherent in the nature of seminary itself, namely as a place of Word and words, of *Logos* and *logoi*. Any attempt to make things better by denigrating the intellect or de-emphasizing concern with Word and words is unacceptable. But how do we encounter the frequent and dismaying experience of alienation between God's Word and our words?

It is an old problem to which first-rate Christian minds have attended in nearly every century of the church's existence. An approach to dealing with it that I like very much is that of Evagrius Ponticus, sometimes referred to as "Evagrius the Solitary." Evagrius had the best theological education of his day, studying with the best theologians of the fourth century, Basil of Caesarea and Gregory Nazianzos, theologians who were also saints. But the last sixteen years of his life were spent in Egypt nurturing a life of spirituality and prayer with the desert fathers. He died in 399 at about 53 years of age.

"The remedy is inherent in the nature of seminary,...namely as a place of Word and words, of Logos *and* logoi."

It was during the Egyptian "desert" years that he wrote about matters of the intellect and prayer with the clarity and wisdom that make him such a good guide for us still. Evagrius used the word *logismos* for the thought or kind of thinking that gets in the way of, or interferes with, the *Logos*. A *logismos* is a thought that gets separated from the *Logos* and more or less takes on a life of its own, going its own way, doing its own thing. Evagrius uses words like *befogged* and *besotted* to describe what happens to our minds when they get filled and busy with *logismos* instead of prayerfully attending to the *Logos*.

Evagrius described in careful detail — using his well-trained intellect with great precision — the various ways in which the *logismos*, the thought that is inattentive or unresponsive or indifferent to God's Word, no matter what its content (and actual contents could be very good indeed), becomes a diversion from God or even an actual defiance of God. The goal, the highest good of the human creature, is that the *knowledge of* God and *prayer to* God converge. Knowledge of God that does not lead to or become prayer to God is, in Evagrius' analysis, demonic — a spirituality divorced from obedience to God. (See *The Philokalia*, Vol. 1; London: Faber and Faber, 1979).

It is a simple distinction, which, with a little practice, we can learn to make for ourselves. The seminary is as good a place as any to begin making these distinctions. In fact, it is probably the very best place to begin doing it, for there is hardly an hour in a seminary day when there is not an occasion in which to exercise these fundamental discernments.

The French have a wonderful phrase, *deformation professionale*,

—please turn to page 22

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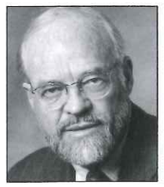

Reclaiming Theology for the Church

BY ROBERT K. JOHNSTON

David Kelsey, in his recent book *To Understand God Truly* (1992), reminds all who are in theological education that our primary purpose should be "theological." That is, the task of theological education should be, first of all, that of "trying to understand God more truly."[1] Instead, seminaries have opted for a professional paradigm. They have wrongly made the *education* of future church leaders their focus.

As Kelsey argues, it is not that theological schooling is incapable of educating church leaders or that church leaders should not go to seminary. They should. Rather, he believes that it is misguided and ultimately counterproductive to define the *purpose* of theological education in professional terms for it "distorts and finally destroys theology."[2] In the process, the clerical paradigm subverts its own intentions, providing insufficient personal resources for graduates who are to nurture and motivate their congregations into a fuller knowledge of God.

Those of us who teach in evangelical seminaries need to hear Kelsey's critique. This essay, in fact is intended as an extended dialogue with Kelsey. For evangelicals seem, in particular, to have accepted the clerical paradigm, unconsciously (and somewhat ironically) furthering the liberal Protestant agenda for theological education which goes back to Schleiermacher's *Brief Outline of the Study of Theology*. Consider the following evidence:

There is in evangelical churches a widening gap between clergy and laity. Despite evangelicalism's commitment to the priesthood of all believers, there is a strong tendency in many churches today for clergy to seek to manage and control all aspects of church life. As numbers decline or growth slackens, centralized strategic thinking and planning tends to take over. Similarly, as family pressures mount, churches find their pastors wanting time off almost like the weekend rotations of doctors. Sabbaticals are negotiated and compensatory time counted. Again, as ethical and legal pressures increase, pastors are being counseled to have close friends only among their "club" of other clergy. Parishioners must be treated as "clients." If such tendencies among seminary graduates are a reflection of the educational training they receive, then a professional paradigm seems strongly in place in most of evangelical theological education today.

"The task of theological education should be...that of 'trying to understand God more fully.'"

Paul Bassett, in his survey of American evangelical seminaries, has found that "almost unanimously, the mission statements and declarations of aims and purposes of evangelical theological schools state very clearly and simply that it is their intention to *equip persons for ministry in Christ's church.*"[3] Here is straightforwardly asserted the professional paradigm. Certain consequences seem to follow.

First, Bassett finds it unanimous among evangelical schools to believe that a personal relationship with Christ is central to theological education. And yet, this is never spelled out as to what it might mean concretely: "It seems that only 8 percent attempt to say why or how it is thus."[4] Instead, a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is asserted as important but is not integrated within the larger professional training enterprise. After all, professional training does not readily lend itself to such personal, interior experiences or judgments.

Second, although 94 percent of the evangelical institutions surveyed "make a point of their concern for the students' spiritual welfare in their mission statements or declarations of aims and objectives, only 21 percent of the evangelical seminaries studied offer anything any more concrete, regular, and continuing than chapel services in support of the students' spiritual development."[5] That is, although to be evangelical is to stress one's walk with the Lord, to be in the business of professional preparation relegates this concern to the cocurricular—to off-hours, evenings, weekends, times at home and in church. Spiritual formation is for most evangelical seminaries personal (subjective), not professional (objective). In this, as in other ways, we give expression to a Cartesian dualism that fragments life and faith.

Third, although Bassett believes evangelical theology causes seminaries in their mission statements to see "explicit commitment to a denomination, movement or tradition" as essential to theological education, and although evangelical seminaries are concerned to be "worshiping communities," they shy away from defining themselves as the church in action, educating persons for ministry.[6] Could it be

Packing for the Journey

BY CHARLES BARKER

I will always find it difficult to know what to pack when I am going on vacation to a new place. Although pastoral ministry definitely has *not* been a vacation, it has been a new place for me. And it is only now, after I have been there for thirteen years, that I finally know what I needed to pack!

I needed a survival plan and support system for spiritual and psychological health and growth. I needed personal preparation and training for the hard tasks of leadership. I needed ministry skills for preaching, teaching, worship, administration, counseling, missions, and community service. I needed to learn how to think biblically, theologically, historically. Pastoral ministry is an extremely demanding journey, and I have needed a lot of help and a lot of resources to have any chance of being effective. Where does the responsibility lie to help prospective pastors pack appropriately for a journey to a destination they know little about? The seminary? The church? Some outside mentor?

The challenge to the seminary is made even more complex when one realizes that many in seminary haven't yet chosen a vocational direction. In my own case, I went to seminary not in preparation for the pastorate, but on my own spiritual journey. I came to seminary at the encouragement of my mentor, an undergraduate philosophy professor, who knew I was filled with questions and doubts about Christian faith and the church, and who believed some time at seminary would be of help to me in my personal faith journey. And it was! I doubt very seriously that I would be a Christian today had I not had the opportunity at Fuller to explore and develop a deeper, truer, more relevant understanding of Christian life and faith. Without a doubt, Fuller's most outstanding contribution to my life was in providing a hospitable place for me to more deeply become a Christian.

And if you ask what has been Fuller's greatest contribution to my work now as a pastor, it is that I learned to think biblically, theologically, and historically, and was given the tools to continue to think in this way beyond the walls of the seminary. This gift I value so highly because it is still the central thing I do every week in my ministry. How should we approach the Scriptures? What are we trying to do in worship anyway? What are the priorities of the church? What is our mission? Does justice matter? What is our responsibility to the community around us? Is a multicultural congregation a goal? What should we expect of leaders in the church? What is the pastor's role? How should we think about and respond to issues of poverty, violence, homosexuality, abortion, racism, the environment? How should we relate to and partner with other churches? What is the goal of preaching? What are we doing when we pray? When we baptize? When we share the Lord's Supper? How do we build community in the church? How do we understand the ministry of the Holy Spirit? Power? Evil? Demons? How do we understand pain, illness, death, healing? What is our hope? What kind of Christians are we seeking to form here anyway?

I have supervised numerous pastoral interns, and I tell them their primary task is to begin to think theologically, because their leadership, preaching, teaching, and caring for people will be shaped primarily by theology. My concern is this: Why are only *pastors* trained to think theologically? So concerned are we about this here at Pasadena Covenant Church that we have begun to think of adult education as "seminary on Sundays!" The need for good Christian learning is so great! ■

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that the public professional paradigm of evangelical seminaries causes them to be "a-ecclesial" in practice?

In these and other ways, evangelical seminaries might be viewed as evidencing a commitment to a professional paradigm of theological education, even when that model seems to create tension with or produce reduction in evangelical theology. Another paradigm is called for. Only as a seminary turns to prepare "theologians," not simply "professionals," can it give students the capacity to serve as the leaders the church desires. The profession, or vocation, of church leadership must remain a byproduct, as it were, not the *raison d'être* of seminary education.

OUR CURRENT "PROFESSIONAL" CURRICULA: THE FOURFOLD PARADIGM

Our commitment as evangelical seminaries to a clerical paradigm of professional training for ministry has meant, with regard to the curricula, a commitment to the same fourfold model of theological education which has characterized Protestant theological schooling since the seventeenth century. David Kelsey would understand this classical fourfold model as functioning theoretically in a linear way: "Truth" (Bible) is explicated; it is then organized systematically (theology); clarified and understood from out of the past (history); and then applied to today (practice).[7] But in reality, there is in our contemporary curricula less than a course of study like the above than a clutch of courses. What we find, says Kelsey, is a movement from theory to practice which lacks integration—"from information about pure theory, 'academic systematic theology,' to information about applied theory, 'academic practical theology' (chiefly counseling theory and church growth theory), to skills training; from science to technology to practitioner."[8]

Perhaps these rationalistic progressions are too simplistic and reductive to adequately capture the curricula of contemporary evangelical seminaries. Yet Kelsey's critique is truer than many evangelicals would care to believe. Many evangelical biblical faculty members would see their work as foundational, concentrating the seminarian's attention on the "first horizon" of the biblical text. Perhaps it is for this reason that evangelical seminary students often choose biblical electives over the other classical disciplines when given the chance. Yet most students would be the first to tell you that the biblical theory and background, focused largely on the "first horizon," is left largely unintegrated within the larger curricula. In like manner, most practical courses function as applied training in aspects of ministry (e.g., counseling, preaching, youth ministry, discipleship, small-group leadership). They fail to build upon the "givens" of the classical disciplines (givens that thus remain theoretical, academic, and unapplied), choosing instead their own theoretical paradigms. And student enrollment in history offerings is often limited largely to "core courses," for students find

> *"Only as a seminary turns to prepare 'theologians,' not simply 'professionals,' can it give students the capacity to serve."*

illustration out of the past of "truths which can be discovered elsewhere" (i.e., in Scripture or in life) to be of secondary importance.

I am not arguing here for what should be, but for a recognition of what is: an inherited professional paradigm with its largely nonfunctional, linear fourfold curriculum.

Unfortunately, this paradigm has tended to undercut both a more holistic, interactive, evangelical theology that would unite faith and practice biblically, and a more universal conception of ministry that would seek empowerment for the priesthood of all believers.

THE CALL FOR A NEW INTERACTIVE MODEL

A new model is called for. Can "beginning theologically readied" replace "becoming professionally readied" as our regnant paradigm? An interesting study was done some years ago on reasons why pastors fail in their local church ministry. The conclusion of the researcher, Rodney Clapp, was that local parishioners could be very forgiving of a pastor who was poor in the pulpit, or who lacked counseling skills, or who was a poor administrator, or was not an intellectual. All of these were helpful, of course, to ministry. But what was crucial was that the pastor be perceived as a woman or man of God. If the pastor was a "holy" person, in touch with God, then what was given had the ring of authenticity. Much else could be forgiven. But if the pastor was simply academically knowledgeable or even worse, simply a "professional," then no amount of information conveyed or skill demonstrated could suffice. It is not enough for someone to study "those matters which are believed to *lead* to true understanding of God";[9] church members would have their pastors *know* God.

If seminaries are interested in *theological* education, they might turn to that threefold paradigm so typical of evangelical thought and practice. James Packer, for example, in writing about his own self-understanding as a biblical theologian, describes himself as "the believer, theologian, and preacher that I am."[10] Here is a model for theological education today. Packer sees (2) academic theology as unto (3) the pastoral task (the preacher), as it is fed by (1) the devotional (the believer). Theology, thus conceived, is an interactive and cooperative enterprise. It seeks to unite faith and practice biblically.

> *"I would want 'theology'. . . to include knowing God (piety) as well as knowing about God (scholarship)."*

This threefold pattern ("to walk with God, to interpret God's Word, and to lead God's people"[11]) parallels the growing consensus by theologians and historians regarding a definition of evangelical theology itself. Evangelical theology (see Fackre, Marsden, Smith, Bloesch, Johnston) may be summarized as being rooted in (1) new life in Christ, (2) biblical authority, and (3) a passion for evangelism and mission.[12] Differing evangelical traditions (e.g., pietist, self-consciously reformed, or baptist) will give different priority and ordering to these three descriptors, but all will view them as necessary and interactive.

Can a seminary's curricula also address such theological concerns interactively, particularly given the multiple secondary professional agendas? Such should be the challenge before us in theological education—to encour-

My Wildest Dreams About Theological Education Are Becoming Reality

BY TIMOTHY A. DEARBORN

For many years I have shared in others' grumbling about the inadequate preparation for ministry most people receive in seminary. Too many graduates enter a church spiritually bankrupt, emotionally drained, morally confused, and functionally incompetent. The hopes and calling with which people sacrificially entered their "time of preparation" are all too often dissected into oblivion under the microscope of analysis. Yet now, this tragedy need never occur again!

I am walking in the fulfillment of my wildest dreams about theological education. Fuller Theological Seminary, Regent College, and over twenty Seattle-area churches have joined together to develop some highly innovative and creative approaches to theological education designed by and for people preparing to serve in the church *and* laypersons who desire to live the faith more fruitfully in their daily lives.

There are several components of these innovations:

■ **Teaching churches:** Just as medical schools have teaching hospitals, now in Seattle the seminaries are linked to *teaching churches*. The best of the academic classroom and the best of the parish are combined. Churches which have always been the prime "users" of the "product" of theological education are now given the opportunity to contribute to the "process" — by helping design the program, by providing classroom facilities, and by providing clergy and lay mentors who focus on a few students in a series of mentorships.

■ **Integrated formation:** The goal of theological education is to equip us to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourself. Now we have a program which intentionally integrates academic, spiritual, relational/character, and ministry-skill formation. Academic excellence must not be sacrificed, but effective pastoral ministry also requires the development of spiritual, relational, and character qualities which have often been outside the focus of traditional academic programs.

■ **Community learning:** Students study for three years in a group of twenty-five people. This provides wonderful opportunity for relational development, corporate worship, and growing as a diverse yet supportive community. In addition, students can study while remaining rooted in their church fellowships, thus not having to relocate into an unfamiliar world in order to study.

■ **Lay focus:** Theological education, even for clergy, has the end goal of equipping *all* the saints for service. Most pastors would admit that laypersons are often the best trainers of clergy, for they know what is needed to be a good pastor. Now, through lay-led learning support groups for students, laypersons are intentionally involved in enabling the preparation of future pastors. In addition, special courses and seminars are designed for laypersons to help equip them to face as Christians the complex ethical, economic, and social challenges which they confront in the workplace.

■ **Global awareness:** In every course, faculty members teach classical disciplines with the contemporary world in mind. Because most of our students are mature adults who are studying only part-time while immersed in parish and workplace issues, the question of how biblical-historical-theological studies can impact our response to current cultural realities is constantly addressed.

We've only begun to walk in the realization of this dream. We're standing on tiptoes in anticipation of what God will do next! ■

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age the development of holistic, interactive theologians, both clergy and lay, so as to serve the whole Church of Jesus Christ.

BECOMING THEOLOGICALLY PREPARED

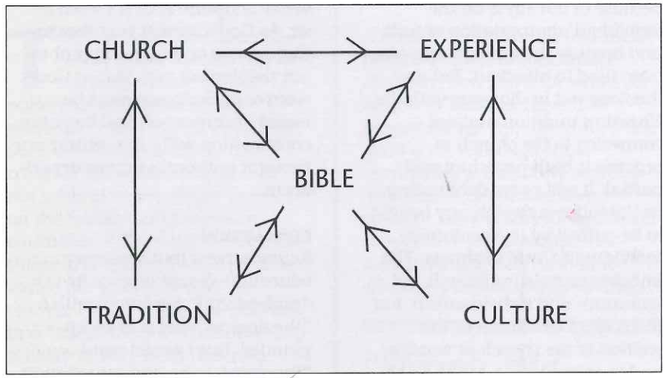
Edward Farley, in his seminal book *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education,* notes that the term *theology* has been fundamentally an ambiguous one, referring "to things of entirely different genres." In the one sense, theology is a habit *(habitus)* of the human soul, a way of knowing God and what God reveals. It is salvifically oriented knowledge. Such an understanding of theology can be said to have characterized the period of Christianity up to the rise of the medieval universities. The second sense of the term *theology,* observes Farley, "refers to a cognitive enterprise using appropriate methods and issuing in a body of teaching." Theology is here understood as a discipline, a deliberate, methodical enterprise whose end is an integrated knowledge about God. (A parallel can be seen in how Aristotle uses the term for knowledge, *episteme,* which can mean true knowledge, as opposed to opinion, but which can also mean an organized body of knowledge.) With the rise of the universities, theology as knowledge (wisdom) thus becomes theology as discipline (science). With the dawn of the Enlightenment, a third understanding of theology emerges. Instead of theology being seen as wisdom (personal knowledge) or as a unitary discipline, it is now viewed as an aggregate of specialities (here is the meaning of "theology" in "theological seminary"). The study of theology comes to be seen as a plurality of studies in preparation for ministerial activities.[13]

Interestingly, Farley finds a rough parallel between these three meanings of *theology* and the three periods of American theological education. He labels these: divinity, scholarship, and profession. "Divinity," writes Farley, "named not just an objective science but a personal knowledge of God and the things of God in the context of salvation. Hence, the study of divinity (theology) was an exercise of piety, a dimension of the life of faith"[14] With the rise of seminaries, the inauguration of postcollege graduate education for the minister, and divinity's separation into the theological sciences, theological education entered a second phase, becoming more an expression of specialized learning. Its goal was the preparation of scholarly pastors. Though such specialization is still typical of seminary education today, and though some seminaries still seek as their primary mission the preparation of the learned minister, the pastor-theologian (e.g., Boston University and Kelsey's Yale University), a third paradigm has largely taken over. Because ministry has come to be viewed sociologically as one of the professions, "the theological student neither studies divinity nor obtains scholarly expertise in theological sciences, but trains for professional activities."[15]

Recalling Packer's self-description as an evangelical theologian, and evangelicalism's common theological center with regard to (1) the personal Lordship of Christ, (2) Scripture's authority, and (3) the Christian's commitment to evangelicalism and mission, Farley's discussion of American theological education takes on a wider meaning. Study in the theological sciences concerning the interpretation of God's Word (scholarship) must be seen within the larger framework of discipline both in strengthening one's walk with God (divinity) and in nurturing one's missional zeal (profession). Here is a full-orbed theological agenda appropriate for theological education today.

EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY AS PARADIGM

In several recent articles, I have suggested a variation of the Wesleyan quadrilateral (Bible, tradition, reason, experience) as a theological structure which might best capture evangelicalism's commitment to Scripture's authority, but within the larger interactive framework of both the personal and the missional. Here might be a model by which to try to shape a curriculum so that students would be fully capacitated as theologians:



To be theologically competent, one must learn to ground his or her understanding in Scripture, which alone is authoritative, but one need not always begin there. It is theologically crucial that we come to the biblical text with an understanding of how our church context, the Christian tradition, our personal experience, and the wider culture bear on the issue. The text will then transform our understandings and send us back in a new theological quest. (Here is the hermeneutical spiral.) Such an understanding will not come theoretically, but only as reflection on Scripture, tradition, and culture are linked praxeologically both with the church at worship and witness and with one's personal and communal experience. The conversation must be interactive.

A. CULTURE AND EXPERIENCE

Evangelicals are sometimes thought to be the people who are one-and-one-half generations behind. Distrusting the culture of modernity, we have failed to take it seriously. This has often caused us to ignore the victims of our culture and has weakened our effectiveness in mission and evangelism. It has also left us theologically disembodied. Evangelical theological education has contributed to this deficiency by isolating its professional training from the context of other educational disciplines. (Even evangelical seminaries which share campuses with liberal arts colleges have largely isolated themselves from the faculties of arts and sciences.) In the fear of putting our cultural situation on a par with Scripture, we have ignored it altogether. We have failed to see culture as both a resource for theological reflection and a framework within which our theological understanding takes place. Common "human experience" (both "experience" and "culture" in our model) and "Christian fact" (both "Bible" and "tradition" in our model) must be reflected on theologically and interactively.

B. TRADITION AND CHURCH

Evangelicals have often lost a sense of our Christian heritage, assuming that acquaintance with Scripture and reliance on the Spirit makes creeds, systems, and church tradition of limited usefulness. But

One Small Dream for a Seminary

BY NANCEY MURPHY

The curricula at Whittier College includes an innovative idea for helping students integrate the various subjects they study. Faculty members from different departments are required to participate in "paired courses," in which they attend one another's classes and provide a degree of coordination of the lectures, readings, and assignments.

For example, I taught "Religion in America," which was paired with a course on early American literature. I organized my course, for instance, to make sure that the students had a lecture on Puritanism before reading their first novel by a Puritan author. We participated in discussions in one another's classes, providing background information, making note of themes relevant to our own disciplines. I was amazed at the extent to which a small amount of sustained thinking on the relation between two subject areas paid dividends in increased understanding on the part of the students.

A constant complaint at seminaries is that the subjects studied are not adequately integrated. To some extent this is a genuine fault of theological education, a consequence of the specialization necessary to do solid work in one's chosen subdiscipline. But to some extent it is the student's own task to see relations among disciplines, and to find how they apply to the real world of church and ministry. Would the institution of paired courses in the seminary provide a practical method for integrating the theological disciplines?

Benefits for the professors would include the chance to learn more of their colleagues' disciplines, intellectual stimulation, and the pure enjoyment of working together. ■

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ignorant of how others have understood the full meaning of the Christian faith, we risk becoming theologically incapacitated. Similarly, evangelicalism has too often been a parachurch movement, even when it has been in the guise of the church. Though we can debate this, we have been suspicious of the ecclesial—both because of our stress on the individual appropriation of faith and because the ecclesial has often been used to attack us. But any theology not in dialogue with the Christian tradition and not connected to the church in practice is both parochial and partial. It will prove debilitating. Its liabilities outweigh any benefit to be gained by its spontaneity, individuality, and freshness. The antidote to stale tradition is not ignorance and individualism, but theological education in the context of the church at worship and in mission.

C. OUR SCRIPTURAL CENTER

With regard to the teaching of Scripture, reform is also called for among evangelical seminaries. It is a puzzling fact that evangelicals who claim a "high view" of Scripture tend not to produce fresh and contagious biblical scholarship. Above all others, those who are faithful to the text ought to demonstrate its living power. Fuller Theological Seminary's Statement of Faith states well the direction our biblical scholarship must take: "All the books of the Old and New Testaments, given by divine inspiration, are the written Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice. They are to be interpreted according to their context and purpose and in reverent obedience to the Lord who speaks through them in living power."[16]

Among much else that could be said is this: All departments of the theological faculty are responsible—each in a way appropriate to its discipline—for teaching the Bible. The fact of the matter is this: Our access to the biblical material is always through mediation. It is through the lens of the church, tradition, experience, or culture that we read the text. It is thus through these same lenses that we must study it. We must learn not only of Scripture's first horizon, but of its second as well.

Thus, dialogue with Scripture must inform all aspects of the task of theological education, and vice versa. Scripture is God's word to us. As God's *word,* it is authoritative over us and foundational to our theological task. But as God's word *to us,* Scripture must be heard in context of, and be put in conversation with, our setting, our thought patterns, and our experiences.

CONCLUSION

Kelsey's thesis that seminary education should replace its "professional" paradigm with a "theological" one is to be applauded. But I would want "theology" to be understood more comprehensively than Kelsey seems to delineate: To include

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Toward Holistic Church/Seminary Relations

BY ROBERT P. MEYE

There can be little disagreement about the wisdom in seeking a more holistic pattern of church/seminary relations in theological education. Such a pattern, claims to the contrary notwithstanding, does not seem to be excitingly present on the horizon of theological education. To be sure, the ultimate shape of a holistic pattern will be varied per seminary and per church. For example, the pattern in a "connectional" church setting is likely to vary from that of a "free" church. A multidenominational seminary finds itself in a different setting than does a denominational seminary. And a large seminary in an urban area might well be led to a different pattern than a small seminary in a less urban area.

There is another thought (fact!) which should find widespread affirmation, namely, that "in the beginning was the church," i.e., before seminaries there were churches or groups of churches or denominations which give birth to "a" or "the" seminary. *[Unless capitalized, "church" will designate the visible, local or other concrete manifestation of the Church universal.]* This does not necessarily mean that the ideal situation is always one in which a seminary "belongs" to a church or a denomination, or in which a denomination "controls" a seminary. But it does mean that *the seminary and the church alike will do well to remember the peculiar family relationship in which they stand, and in which they can best flourish and realize their highest purposes.*

Seminaries and churches have often sought to conform church/seminary relationships to a more holistic pattern of *co*existence. However, new starts for whatever reason or reasons, have not progressed far enough toward this good goal. Although some seminaries, particularly seminaries within a denominational context, have achieved significant cooperative relationships, it remains a question as to how effectively this cooperation filters

> *"Strong and fruitful relationships are almost always a costly achievement."*

into the theological education of a given student — a future "servant-leader" of a church — on a given day.

But what *has been* must not be a barrier to a brighter future. Our experience of church history, however, will remind us that truly significant change is a very elusive reality. And transformation of church/seminary relationships may be as elusive as transformation of church or the seminary itself!

Perhaps another demurral is in order early on: *Strong and fruitful relationships are almost always a costly achievement,* in two respects at least. Authentic relationships involve a reach toward understanding and *co*existence which almost invariably call for a revision of preunderstandings (or prejudices). Such do exist in and between agencies of the churches.... Living together with differences persistently requires patient, hard work.

Believers, in both their individual and corporate existence, are called to love the Church — and the churches — that Christ loves. Surely this love embraces the individual and corporate components (such as the seminary) which make up and serve the Body of Christ. But, according to Eric Fromm, love is an art, and every art is and needs discipline. The traditional marriage covenant, with its sturdy covenant language, stands as a constant reminder of the determination and work demanded of the love that endures and sustains a concrete relationship.

Organizational relationships, just because they are based on time, also have a cost in terms of sheer economics. To be sure, there are few calendars or annual plans that are not subject to at least modest improvement — thus freeing time for higher priority engagements. However, within an institutional setting, deepening and broadening relationships will regularly call for the employment of new time and energies, which will appear as an increase in the annual budget.

Regardless of the costliness of both expanding and deepening church/seminary relationships, such as enriched, deepened, informed, *earnest* symbiosis, uniting the church and the seminary can only be regarded as a "pearl of great price." The price is one which the wise church *and* the wise seminary will be more than willing to pay.

THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH— AND THE SEMINARY

Some comment concerning the nature of the church and the seminary is in order by way of reminding us of the high stakes of this venture. Although a full

Frustrations at Fuller

BY EDDIE GIBBS

I was given this title, which inevitably means that there will be a somewhat negative tone to my contribution. So, in order to ensure some balance, at the outset I want to say that during the past nine years I have spent at Fuller Theological Seminary, I have enjoyed most of my time in the classroom, met some great students, been enriched by the cultural and denominational diversity and challenged and stimulated by my faculty colleagues. The fact that I have been a member of both the faculties of the School of World Mission and the School of Theology has also provided interesting perspectives. Having gotten all that off my chest, I address the topic assigned to me, namely frustrations experienced in seeking to prepare our students to serve the churches!

■ Frustration number one arises from the fact that I am not a career academic, and that my orientation is to practical theology. This assigns one professionally to the margins of the institution. Please don't misunderstand my point. I take very seriously the theological undergirding of my particular disciplines, those of Evangelism and Church Renewal. I believe in the need to use our intellectual capacities to the fullest, and be diligent in research. But having said that, one still does not relate easily to the academic guild and value system. I have no complaints with the attitude of my colleagues. They have been accepting and affirming. My comment relates to the seminary culture and value system.

■ Frustration number two relates to the difficulty of attempting to relate theory and praxis in relation to evangelism. I have often likened my task to attempting to teach skiing by sliding down the corridor. While I believe you can learn pastoral, spiritual formation, and homiletic skills in a seminary classroom setting, evangelism

description of each lies outside the scope of our proposal, we do need to be clear as to *who* it is entering into this deepened, symbiotic relationship, particularly in respect to the way in which the two entities most naturally interface with one another.

The Church, the Body of Christ, is a universal, concrete reality born of the powerful, creative, and loving activity of the triune God. In its mission of glorifying and serving God, the Church is ever called to be attentive and obedient to the creative Spirit of God, who empowers its life and illumines its

"Once established... schools have a tendency to develop an interior life of their own."

mission. The Church, as a living and growing organism in the world, ever needs to be renewed and strengthened in its self-understanding and service. It must be "born again" from generation to generation. The Church's store of understanding and its "logical service," like the manna which Israel of old gathered on a daily basis, is subject to constant renewal.

In faith and prayer for deepened understanding and strength of service, the churches have — among other things — established theological schools or seminaries. In the midst of a host of different settings which typify the ordinary Christian context, both in its individual and in its corporate manifestations, even as in the public sector of life, the "school" has ever and again proved to be an essential, even critical, context for establishing an adequate self-understanding, as well as the patterns of service correspondent to that understanding.

It is not necessary to recite in detail the long history of symbiosis between churches and schools. Suffice it to say that, beginning with Jesus Christ, and moving on through the Apostle Paul and the earliest church, through the Church's history, *the people of God have always been given or sought or formed an "educational center" in order to deepen understanding toward "the obedience of faith" among all the nations.*

One problem has been that, once established, "schools," even as other agencies of the church, have a certain tendency to develop an interior life of their own — a kind of independent (bureaucratic?) form of existence, often with only tenuous links to the people of God in their manifold patterns of ecclesial life and ministry. Thus, the seminary, like the church, is also in constant need of renewal. The renewal of the school will always involve a movement toward a deepened and more vital *re*union with the church (in whatever form it exists).

All problems, it should be noted, do not lie on the side of ecclesial agencies, or "schools." Sadly, the church's heritage, both in Scripture and beyond, has often been lost sight of, or misunderstood within, the Church at large. Again and again through the centuries, Christians, whether individually or corporately, have regularly forgotten their heritage — supposing that their current understandings or patterns of service (both of which may contain elements alien to the gospel), have always been and will always be. Renewal typically begins with a recovery of lost vision. From time to time, the theological school may be the place in the larger Church where that renewal begins.

It is remarkable that John Wesley, whose name is indelibly

attached to evangelical renewal in a church of his own time, entered into his own "strangely warming" and renewing experience of Christ upon hearing someone read from Martin Luther's *Preface to the Epistle to the Romans.* That introduction reports Luther's struggle of faith, and the new vision of God given to Luther more than two centuries before Wesley. Interestingly enough, "introduction" to biblical literature is a genre typically associated with scholarship and schools; seminary graduates may have a difficult time imagining a revival stemming from an encounter with "biblical" introduction!

Something less than the desired, holistic pattern of church/seminary relationships will prevail if either church (denomination) or seminary does not have an integrated program of reflecting upon and developing a vital and mutual interrelationship between church and seminary. On the seminary side, the lack may take the form of satisfaction with a series of isolated incursions into the churches, often by separate administrative units whose efforts are not linked together in a consistent and meaningful way, etc. On the part of the churches, the lack may take the form of "sending" students to seminary, but not following students with prayer (and other meaningful support) through the long and rigorous journey back to the churches. For both the church and the seminary, the common danger is that they may expect the other party to perform a service apart from authentic conversation, or mutual involvement and accountability.

One special comment on the nature of the needed church/seminary conversation is in order. Just as there is a particular wisdom reflected in the diverse patterns of churchly existence — i.e., Episcopal, Presbyterial, and Congregational patterns — so there is wisdom in conversations between the seminary and the churches at these various "points of leadership." Even though matters of church polity can not be disregarded, there is great wisdom with effective conversation with the churches at all levels.

There is much to talk about. There is much to claim the attention in common of church and seminary. But the deeper meaning of the church's original formation of the seminary and continued call upon the seminary can illuminate the relationship of church and seminary. It is to a vital aspect of that meaning — or *symbolism* — that we now turn.

THE SYMBOLISM OF THE SCHOOL FOR THE CHURCH

We have noted the obvious, that the church is the parent of the seminary or theological school — or any other educational center which the church forms to support

"There was a reason that the churches... formed seminaries or theological schools."

its mission. It is useful to reflect on the symbolism of the church's "birthing" of this particular child. The five notes which follow below by no means exhaust the symbolism of the theological school, but they delineate some primary characteristics. Only the briefest commentary on this symbolism can be provided here; there is need, in fresh conversation between church and seminary, for mutual consideration of the full significance of these observations en route to a more holistic pattern of mutual service.

■ **THE CHURCH IS ALWAYS A LEARNER.** The Church of Jesus Christ (and with it, each discreet part of that Church — here, each church and each agency of the

presents special problems, mainly because there is no one in class who can be evangelized! Practice in evangelism between students inevitably is forced and artificial, especially when it is for credit! Therefore, the practical aspects need to be done outside the classroom. I have never felt happy about trying to organize evangelistic SWAT teams, because I believe that our evangelistic outreach should be church-based and on the basis of student availability to form ongoing relationships.

■ Frustration number three is that I believe it takes a community to adequately communicate the gospel. That community must be a worshiping and fellowshiping community, rather than one which is structured according to academic programs and course offerings. The class consists so often of people who are strangers to one another, and who may not meet again unless they opt for the same course offered in the same quarter. It is only when we have adequate time to share our faith stories and establish a sense of mutual trust, appreciation, and accountability, that we will be able to evangelize together—that is to share the overflow of the abundant life which we share in Christ.

My last frustration relates to the way that the curricula fragments issues. I can only speak for my own area at Fuller. In order to be an effective evangelist in the 1990s, you need deeply rooted Trinitarian theology, a biblically faithful Christology, an aptitude for apologetics, an ability to work in small groups, and the ability to communicate with the unchurched in sermons and dialogue. I know enough of my colleagues to know that a number of these issues are addressed in other courses. My plea is for integration rather than handling these topics in isolation.

I know it is unfair simply to list frustrations, if by doing so I give the impression that I have the answers. I frankly admit that I do not have many solutions. But I have experi-

enced enough to realize that we may need to radically rethink the way in which we prepare leaders for the church in the 1990s. That dialogue has to be conducted as much with the churches and Christian organizations we serve as with the accrediting agencies. I will continue to pray that the leadership at Fuller Theological Seminary will be given great wisdom and courage during a time of significant transition. ■

EDDIE GIBBS was, until the summer of 1993, the Robert Boyd Munger Associate Professor of Evangelism and Church Renewal at Fuller Theological Seminary, when he resigned to become assistant rector at All Saints Church in Beverly Hills, California. He attended Oakhill Theological College and graduated from London Bible College, where he gained the London University degree of Bachelor of Divinity in 1962, passing his general ordination examinations for the Church of England the next year. In 1982, he received the Doctor of Ministry from Fuller Theological Seminary. From 1984 through 1988 he served as assistant professor of church growth in the School of World Mission. He was training director of Mission England, and initiator of the Church Growth Training Conference in the United Kingdom from 1982 through 1984, and has worked as an Anglican parish priest, a missionary to Chile, a mission administrator, a church growth developer, and an executive with the British and Foreign Bible Society. His seminars on evangelism, church renewal, leadership and management have been offered through the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Luis Palau Crusades, the Lausanne Conference, the Salvation Army, and for church denominations and parachurch organizations around the world.

church) is a learning church. At the beginning of his incarnate ministry, the Lord called disciples to be the primary recipients of himself and his teaching. And Jesus promised that after his glorious resurrection, he would give to them the Holy Spirit who would take his teaching and bring it to their remembrance. Again, each of the New Testament documents displays the Church as a learning church. The people of God are only faithful to their Lord as they receive and obey, unto life and sanctification, the teaching of the New Testament and of the entire Bible. In its devoted study and scholarship, in its extensive curricula, in its library, and in

"The seminary is a child of the church—a child that the church wanted, and now needs."

much else, the theological school is a prime symbol of the Church as learner.

■ **THE CHURCH IS ALWAYS A TEACHER.** From the beginning, the Church has been a teacher. The Lord of the Church took the form of a teacher in his incarnate ministry. A primary ministry of the Spirit of Christ is making present and fruitful in the mind and life of the Church the words of the Word incarnate. In explicating the gospel of God, the great apostle Paul was a teacher of the churches. The Church is ever warned about the great danger of *false* teaching. Every document in the New Testament canon is a teaching document in its own right. Thus, the Church is only faithful to its Lord as it transmits that content and offers that "reasonable" service which (together) bears the name of "teaching." In its extensive and intensive and devoted teaching, the theological school is a prime symbol of the Church as teacher.

■ **THE DEPTH AND BREADTH OF GOD'S SELF-REVELATION CALLS FOR DISCIPLINED LEARNING AND TEACHING IN THE CHURCH.** Evidently the Church has never become the master of God's self-revelation in Scripture. Over the millennia, the Church has given itself to the intense study of the Word of God without depleting, but rather magnifying, its treasure. Endless commentaries on the Bible, great theological libraries, and all the rest, are tacit testimony to the infinite treasury which the Word of God is for the Church. Even though this treasury is wide-open and its contents freely available to the humblest, the Church has recognized the need both to guard the treasury and to disseminate its riches to all the citizens of the Kingdom. All the energy, and all the instruments of learning devoted in the theological school to the study of Scripture, and to the life and thought of the Church arising from Scripture, are a prime symbol of the depth of —
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The Challenge of Tomorrow's Church to Today's Seminary

BY ROBERT J. BANKS

Two years ago, another member of our faculty and I called together a small group of pastors and a couple of parachurch leaders. We began to meet regularly on campus and in time were joined by another member of our Division of Ministry. These pastors were all involved in innovative forms of church planting or renewal, and the parachurch leaders were committed to resourcing such efforts. All were working in the greater Los Angeles region. The informal name for the exercise was the "Tomorrow's Church" group.

The group was composed of a copastor from an Episcopal church in an affluent area, a woman copastor in an ethnically diverse inner-surburban Presbyterian congregation, a pastor establishing an unconventional Baptist church in an outlying suburb, the senior member of the pastoral team of a new nondenominational church in Orange County, and the lay founder of a community church in one of the cities surrounding downtown Los Angeles. Two of the parachurch leaders belonged to a well-known international organization committed to encouraging church renewal: the other had founded a new organization to help churches develop new ministries for people with psychological needs. For part of the time, we were joined by representatives from a predominantly Hispanic church in East Los Angeles, a middle-class African-American church in the San Gabriel Valley, and an Asian church from an older outer-city center.

The group shared a belief that established models of church life, as well as charismatic ones that sprang up in the sixties and seventies, were inadequate for the future. They did draw on such models, as well as on more recent ones (such as the seeker-service approach associated with Willow Creek). But they felt that the church of the future could not rely

"It is those who go away with a greater spiritual hunger . . . who will most shape the church of the future."

on any one of these, and would need to shape itself in unexpected ways as it sought to be responsive to God and its context.

THE THREE STAGES OF DISCUSSION

The first stage of the group's interaction revolved around the analysis of the state of the church today, types of churches that were in existence, and role models that group members found most helpful in their quest for church renewal and growth. Most of this took the form of free-floating discussion, often over a meal, preceded by an introduction providing some general framework for our conversation.

The second stage involved members of the group telling the story of what had happened in their churches or parachurch organizations and what they were wrestling with at present. Into this they wove their own personal and vocational story. There was a refreshing honesty in their

Pastoral Preparatory Paradigms

BY KENNETH J. FONG

In his insightful book *Future Edge*, paradigm shift authority Joel Arthur Barker makes the following assertion:

"For the past four years I have been describing three keys to the future of any organization, profit or nonprofit, that wants to participate fully in the twenty-first century. They are: Anticipation, Innovation, and Excellence."

As I near the completion of my thirteenth year in full-time ministry in a local church since graduating from Fuller, I can appreciate much better the value of my seminary education. Barker's three keys will provide a matrix for my appraisal.

■ **EXCELLENCE.** Coming from the rigorous undergraduate environment of U.C. Berkeley, I felt right at home when I arrived at Fuller. Of course, I did my share of complaining about the seminary's high academic standards, but in my heart, I knew that I would thrive under the pressure. In the process, I cultivated the kind of disciplined, thorough-going, efficient work habits which have continued to serve me well in the endless pressure-mill a growing church can be. Beyond that, Fuller's emphasis on producing work of the highest caliber has carried over wonderfully into my pastoral ministry. With excellence as my standard, for example, I bring my best efforts to pastoral duties, e.g., weddings, funerals, baptisms, commissionings, preaching, etc., that over time can easily become quite mundane and routine. Fuller certainly has given me a passion for excellence.

■ **INNOVATION.** Innovation is different from creativity. Creativity is the ability to think of new ideas. Innovation is *doing* something with those new ideas. I have discovered in ministry that while we may spend a good deal of time tossing around new ideas and garnering new insights, we often do not make any

fundamental changes in how or what we are doing. Our ministries therefore tend to petrify, preventing us from actively participating in the future.

Fuller's open approach to education gave me the room to be an innovator. Far too often in too many seminaries, what is advertised as an education is more akin to an indoctrination. Instead of developing an ability to think critically, freely, and creatively, one is rewarded for letter-perfect regurgitation of the most acceptable ideas and doctrines. Building on its evangelical foundation, I always felt that Fuller encouraged me to confront my hidden biases and test the limits of my preconceptions. As a result, I have felt the endorsement and empowerment to explore uncharted ministerial territories and synthesize fresh, incarnational approaches. Fuller has given me the permission to be innovative.

■ **ANTICIPATION.** I have seen far too many examples in which ministers have assumed that the future is going to be exactly like today. They could not be more wrong. Our context for ministry is a rapidly changing and shrinking world. If we lack the ability to correctly anticipate what the needs and demands of ministry will be, we risk becoming irrelevant.

Fuller is uniquely suited to prepare ministers to tackle the future. With its three world-class graduate schools, it offers every student the opportunity to engage in interdisciplinary studies. With the ability to integrate my thinking in terms of theology, psychology, and missiology, I believe I have the tools to address the complex challenges of a sinful, dysfunctional, and culturally diverse world. Fuller has prepared me to anticipate the future with competence and hope. ■

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accounts, especially when they talked about their uncertainties, difficulties, and failures.

The third stage focused on common characteristics within these stories. The group as a whole worked to discern these. Those who had told their stories also reflected on how well their seminary training had prepared them for what they were doing and in what ways such training could be improved to enable others to develop creative forms of church life.

The questions asked at this stage of the exercise were as follows:

■ What is common about the point of departure of each innovation?

■ What are the common elements in the methodology used to bring these innovations to life?

■ What is common about learning or change processes that accompanied the innovations and what sustains them today?

■ What is common about how the ministries of these churches developed or about the focus of their ministries?

■ What is common about the leadership styles and structures which develop and support the innovations?

From the answers to these, we read off some of the basic elements which churches of the future would require if they were to carry out their God-given mandate effectively.

BASIC INGREDIENTS IN DEVELOPING TOMORROW'S CHURCHES

At the outset we recognized that there were significant differences between the stories that had been told. This was partly due to the types of churches with which persons were working, the denominational tradition from which they came, and the local context in which each was set. This caused us to reflect on the extraordinary versatility of God, and on the room that should always exist for constructive differences.

On the other hand, some commonalities did emerge in each of the five areas listed above, though these were not always present in every story or always present to the same degree.

PERSONAL POINT OF DEPARTURE

■ Internal restlessness, a struggle with their own humanness and context, resulting in a sense of call with the Bible and spirituality as a driving force behind this.

■ Seeking "reality" and "community" in the church, a hope for something more, a desire to disciple people.

■ Not just a case of "building" something, but "nurturing" persons, primarily a desire to help hurting people (many of whom appear to have it all together).

■ A sense of humility (not possessing whole truth or power) and a general willingness to be accountable to others.

■ A willingness to be different to others in the denomination, to work on the margins, in difficult places or outside standard church structures.

■ A ministry accountable to particular human communities, starting with the church itself.

DEVELOPMENT OF CHURCH

■ Meeting of a person (with a vision or on a journey) with a group of people (who want and are open to more, or who are mavericks and willing to be different).

■ Beginning in small, or relatively small, groups with attention to bonding and learning what to do together.

■ Using an open-ended approach, discovering as we go, with an uncertainty as to methods and a willingness to let things go.

■ Maintaining a strong leadership and a commitment to empowering the people to work at vision; investing in, and owning, the results.

■ Having a willingness to engage and challenge people, intentionally going beyond nominality, strengthening ties of accountability.

■ Searching literature and sifting through the existing models, finding something but not everything (often not enough).

FOCUS OF MINISTRY

■ Showing concern for a particular group (or groups) of people, their brokenness or need, a group on the margins of the church or society or who are caught in the pressures at the heart of life today.

■ Caring for and being with people as more than mission to people — not just therapeutic, but with compassion.

■ Realizing people are ends, not just means — therefore utilizing a more holistic approach to others.

■ Focusing what happens at central meeting on people, whether believers or seekers; more participatory, celebratory, contemporary.

■ Using intentional, highly contextual, multifaceted ways to connect with the population as one way of attracting people; evangelism is not a program and is more than preaching.

■ Discipling others and experiencing spiritual formation as a focus at the beginning, middle, and end.

LEADERSHIP STYLE AND STRUCTURE

■ Sharing leadership between laypeople and clergy, men and women, and across denominational lines; determined more by call, person, and context than by professional qualifications.

■ Possessing a strong center, strong periphery; those at the core walking in, and with, the community.

■ Developing a communal vision, including shaping it and incarnating it, guarding and critiquing it, keeping it alive and updating it.

■ Expecting accountability, so it tends to be built in; this involves revisiting one's basic vision or principles; and concern for one's integrity and priorities under God.

■ Seeking sensitivity to the Holy Spirit in its emphasis upon diversity in leadership, democracy or nonnominality in membership, and mutuality in relationships.

■ Understanding that pastoring is primarily about relationships and people — more than about teaching and preaching, or managing and empire building.

SOME GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

■ Often feeling for, and discovering, a new language for talking about what goes on — another indication of the Holy Spirit's presence.

■ Possessing a sense of adventure in all these enterprises, felt by both leaders and laypeople.

■ Assuming throughout a commitment to growth rather than a steady-state situation; not merely expansionist but integrative and maturing.

■ Recognizing people's humanness from beginning to end; working with and not against that.

■ Although recognizing commonality in the point of departure and in ministry development, realizing that most everything is very diverse.

■ Tying the church more to the people involved than in some model they are following. (This was exemplified in the different, personal ways people told their stories.)

Although these commonalities were identified, the majority of members in the group were adamant that they could not be turned into formulas or techniques, and then "packaged" or marketed in a straightforward way. They could be articulated and shared, but the best form through which to do this was the one we had adopted, that is, through storytelling and subsequent reflection. Beyond that, as one of them commented, "It is very difficult to catch the Holy Spirit by the tail." Even what they had in common rarely expressed itself in exactly the same way.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS IN EQUIPPING TOMORROW'S CHURCH MINISTERS

With these common elements in mind, the group was asked to consider how others could be helped and equipped to begin their own voyages of discovery in ministry. As part of this, they reflected on what implications this might have for the shape of seminary training. To assist them in thinking through these issues, they were asked to answer the

Reflections on How Seminary Education Has Enriched My Ministry

BY HENRY B. GREENE

I entered the M.Div. program at Fuller in 1974 — fresh out of college and having been deeply involved in the local church for all of three years. I came to Fuller with three things: 1) fervent faith in Jesus Christ; 2) commitment to the Bible as God's written Word; 3) the theological breadth given me by several volumes of William Barclay's commentaries. I was in the hands of my seminary. It would have a formative affect on me.

Early on, Ralph Martin and George Ladd acquainted me with different interpretations and hermeneutics in a way that didn't undermine the authority of Scripture. All the different "criticisms" (form, historical, literary, textual) were new to me. I was helped to understand them, interact with them, and receive their contributions — but also to be aware of their presuppositions and limitations. I learned to be freer to engage more "critical" scholars without being threatened by them.

Some of my ideas needed to change. I vividly remember the day I told my wife what I had learned from James Daane about a particular aspect of election. She said, "There goes another conception we had." Yes, and it needed to go. But what I appreciate so much is that my awareness of biblical and theological issues could grow in an environment that was firmly bounded by conviction of the inspiration and authority of Scripture.

This exposure to varied biblical/theological viewpoints and their presuppositions had an interpersonal gain for me. It increased my capacity for hearing and understanding the

points of view of others without feeling compelled to agree and, at the same time, without feeling threatened. This has made me a better pastor, head of staff, and moderator of our church Session (our governing board).

I cannot reflect on the contributions of seminary to my ministry in the church without mentioning the concrete resources Fuller provided. In my sixteen years as pastor I have often reached for my seminary notebooks: exegesis papers written for George Ladd, ethics papers written for Lew Smedes, Paul Jewett's treatises. I have lately been teaching and preaching on the Gospel of Mark, and have regularly used my notebook from Paul Byer's class on campus Bible study.

I came to seminary as a "theological babe" (and am still quite young). The Lord used Fuller to nurture my faith in Jesus Christ and confidence in the Bible, and at the same time, to broaden my diet through healthy interaction with a diversity of scholars. I have *often* wished I could do my M.Div. work all over again. ■

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following questions:

- What in your experience with seminaries and other forms of ministerial formation has been most important to you in empowering you in what you are doing now?
- What kind of character traits and skills would best suit a pastor or lay leader who wanted to embark on a journey similar to the one contained in our stories?
- If a seminary were free to radically reshape the content and method of its learning processes, what would it be doing to support the formation of such a person?

The answers were gathered here in the same order:

EMPOWERING EXPERIENCES

- Through dealing with existence of tensions in theology, learning to live with tensions generally in life.
- Including some course, content, and methods of teaching with general or direct application to life.
- Coming across pastoral and lay models, mentors and heroes of faith, or learning about them, or being supported by them outside the seminary.
- Being taken seriously as a person (especially if a woman) by faculty and students.
- Placing emphasis upon prayer and worship, and the dependence upon God exhibited by certain people.
- Sharing between peers and peer mentoring as being formative, giving vocational direction, and building some lasting friendships.
- Breaking down parochialism of local church, narrow theological convictions, etc.

CHARACTER TRAITS AND SKILLS

Character traits:

- Humility
- Search for reality
- Recognition of humanness
- Willingness to take risks and be adventurous
- Struggling with and surviving failure
- Being relational
- Pleasing God rather than denomination
- Growing spiritually
- Patience and perseverance

Skills:

- Ability to listen
- Dealing with oneself
- Creating open spaces and flexible structures
- Articulating vision
- Community building
- Pastoral approach
- Implementation skills
- Long-term perspective
- Sense of timing

RESHAPING SEMINARY TRAINING

- Need for more models of faith and ministry (especially female ones) and including laypeople.
- Mentoring is important, by faculty as well as pastors and laypeople, so that students can develop a more holistic approach.
- More time for reflection in seminary, so that students can integrate what they have learned; regular retreats would help.
- More flexibility required in training people for ministry; multiple tracks and possibilities — some tracks more academically oriented, others more practical.
- Helping students to read the culture better, adding a sociological dimension to the theological and psychological dimensions already present.
- Greater emphasis upon spirituality — learning how to talk "to" God as well as "about" God; stressing formation as well as information.
- More attention to struggles, pressures, failure in ministry, and calling on role models who are in the midst of these or have come through them (not always success stories).
- Learning better how to reflect on off-campus activities and responsibilities at home and at work, as well as becoming more realistic about these demands and about the amount of financial pressure people can handle.
- Integrating the work of Fuller's three schools more, with an emphasis upon producing missionary pastors, "tentmakers," etc.

It is important to remember that these suggestions apply as much to the training of leading laypeople in the church as to those receiving more formal recognition. As already mentioned, one of the members of the group, and other key people involved in these churches, were laypeople. The layperson in the group was holding down a more than full-time job, yet had played the primary part in founding a church and remained one of the key figures in it.

CONCLUSIONS

What might this mean for seminary training? Instead of responding to this question generally, let me say how we at Fuller Theological Seminary have responded to the issues raised by the "Tomorrow's Church" group.

First, we sought to make the group's findings known more broadly. As soon as they appeared, they were fed into and discussed as part of a comprehensive review being undertaken by our Division of Ministry of its goals, curricula, and structure. They were distributed to key members of Fuller's administration, who were also invited to meet with the group for its final session. In addition, they were summarized for a meeting of the seminary-wide Task Force on Ministry Renewal as it was finalizing its recommendations on steps the seminary needs to take if it is to prepare students to deal with changes taking place in the church and society. The opportunity of writing this article fulfills a recommendation of the group that we circulate its findings to a wider audience associated with the seminary.

Second, we are seeking to strengthen links with the churches represented in the group. This will take various forms. In two introductory courses — "Foundations for Ministry" and "Liberating the Laity" — students already have had the opportunity to visit these churches so that they could observe forms of "cutting-edge" ministry at work. We have now built into these courses an action-reflection assignment based on such visits and are beginning to invite into the classroom members of the group (in one case with a team of laypeople) to share part of their story. More significant steps are under way to establish a special relationship with these and other vital churches, so that a significant number of students can do closely supervised practicums and internships with them. In effect they will be "teaching churches" connected to the seminary in much the same way as good teaching hospitals are connected to medical schools. We are already discussing with one of these churches the possibility of holding an evangelism course on site, in which class active involvement in creative forms of the church's outreach will be combined with theological reflection. This could become a model for further endeavors along these lines.

Third, a number of the group's concerns are reinforcing efforts to make spiritual and communal formation more central in the seminary. Since the quality of our character and relationships is the foundation for effective and long-lasting ministry, it is critical to induct students into formational — as well as intellectual and vocational — practices during their training. As certain contributors to the current debate on theological education are emphasizing, inculcating such practices is even more important than focusing on specific competencies we would like students to attain. As a Division of Ministry we are starting to examine how well our offerings and programs encourage such practices. We are also considering the development of a more holistic and integrative introductory full-year course, which would strengthen the role of the weekly small groups that operate within our existing course, incorporate monthly faculty-student meetings, and expand our present one-day spirituality workshop into quarterly retreats. The School of Theology is also developing a ministry transcript, in which involvement in such activities, as well as other vocational learning experiences, would be recorded alongside the customary academic transcript.

Fourth, the "Tomorrow's Church" group's findings contain a challenge to the general ethos or culture of the seminary. Students come to seminary with an expectation that they will be equipped to fulfill whatever ministry God has for them personally, and as a seminary we tend to reinforce this individualistic understanding of what ministry entails. Even when we help students develop relational communal skills, because prevailing models of ministry focus on the individual rather than the ministry team as a whole, and because assignments and assessment — even of practical ministry experience — rarely involve cooperative or collaborative activity, the Lone Ranger career path approach to ministry continues to dominate. Students also come, and frequently leave, with a clear demarcation in mind between the contribution that those in ordained and lay ministry can make, operating as if there is a kind of qualitative distinction between the two. Even though we have a range of courses that focus on the ministry of the whole people of God, the impression is often given that the M.Div. program (or ordained ministry) is the only option for those who are really serious about doing God's work. We need to give more thought to how learning and training within the seminary can

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The Seminary as a Place of Spiritual Formation

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to refer to maladies that we are particularly liable to in the course of pursuing our line of work. Physicians are in constant danger of becoming calloused to suffering, lawyers in danger of cynicism about justice, and those of us who think and talk and read and write God are in danger of having the very words we use about God separate us from God, the most damning *deformation* of all.

Saint Paul wrote about taking "every thought captive to obey Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). There is not even a hint of anti-intellectualism in that phrase. He is *not* banning thought. (Have we ever witnessed a more exuberant exercise of the intellect than in Paul?) But he knows that thought, even when it is about God (maybe even *especially* when it is about God), soon becomes self-serving, prideful, and (using Evagrius' bold *designation*), demonic — if it is not brought vigorously, regularly, and devoutly before the living God in prayerful obedience.

There is a sense in which the seminary cannot do this for itself. But all of us who count seminaries as an important part of the church's ministry can contribute to the spiritual formation that takes place in them by practicing these discernments and posting these warnings at appropriate times and places. It might not seem like much, but an accurate road sign posted at the right place prevents considerable disaster. And an occasional "Capture the *logismos*" scrawled on a classroom wall wouldn't be a bad idea either. ■

Reclaiming Theology for the Church

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knowing God (piety) as well as knowing about God (scholarship); to include a praxeological knowledge gained through the interaction of obedient service (mission) and Christianly informed reflection; and finally, to be seen as "of" and "for" the church, not just "about" it. The ambiguity with regard to "theology's" definition that Farley describes need not be considered a liability. Nor must one choose between competing options, as Kelsey does. (He seems ultimately to choose for scholarship.) Instead, theology in its comprehensiveness and breadth can become our educational paradigm.

Viewed with regard to the curriculum, evangelical theological education will need to recognize the Spirit's empowering and enlightening role outside the traditional classroom, both in the spiritual formation that is nurtured and in the ecclesial context that is encouraged through worship and apprenticeship. But the Spirit is not limited to this. The power of the Holy Spirit will be evident throughout the theological enterprise, in our interactive reflection with culture as well as church, with Scripture as with tradition, in reflection on personal experience and on that of one's neighbors.

How does theological capacitation happen? It is ultimately a mystery—the interactive work of the Spirit in our lives. But such work can also be described typologically. It is an understanding and involvement with our present context (both spiritual and secular, individual and communal), with the widest possible Christian tradition (both past and present, at worship and in witness), and with an authoritative Scripture which will allow the Spirit to witness to and through us of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Here is the task for theological education today—to theologically capacitate the whole Body of Christ for the ministry of Christ's Church in the world. ■

ENDNOTES

1 David H. Kelsey, *To Understand God Truly: What's Theological about a Theological School* (Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 131.

2 Kelsey, 162.

3 Paul Bassett, "The Aims and Objectives of Evangelical Theological Education: An Empirical Analysis of the 'Mission Statements' and Declarations of 'Aims and Objectives' of Eighty-One Evangelical Seminaries and Bible Colleges in the United States," typed manuscript, May 14, 1991, 1 (underlining mine).

4 Bassett, 16.

5 Bassett, 15.

6 Bassett, 16–18.

7 Kelsey, 232–33.

8 Kelsey, 97.

9 Kelsey, p. 31.

10 James Packer, "In Quest of Canonical Interpretation," in *The Use of the Bible in Theology: Evangelical Options,* Robert K. Johnston, ed. (John Knox Press, 1985), 40.

11 Covenant Seminary, mission statement.

12 Robert K. Johnston, "American Evangelicalism: An Extended Family," in *The Variety of American Evangelicalism,* ed. Donald W. Dayton and Robert K. Johnston (University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 261: "For all their variety and particularity, descriptions of contemporary American evangelicalism have a commonality centered on a threefold commitment: A dedication to the gospel that is expressed in a personal faith in Christ as Lord, an understanding of the gospel as defined authoritatively by Scripture, and a desire to communicate the gospel both in evangelicalism and social reform. Evangelicals are those who believe the gospel is to be experienced personally, defined biblically, and communicated passionately." Cf. Donald Bloesch, *The Future of Evangelical Christianity* (Doubleday, 1983), 5–6; Timothy Smith, "Evangelical Christianity and American Culture," in *A Time to Speak: The Evangelical-Jewish Encounter,* ed. A. James Rudin and Marvin R. Wilson (Eerdmans, 1987), 60; Gabriel Fackre, "Evangelicalism," *Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology,* ed. Alan Richardson and John Bowden (Westminster, 1983), 191; and George M. Marsden, "Evangelical and Fundamental Christianity," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion,* ed. Mircea Eliade (Macmillan, 1987), 5:190.

13 Edward Farley, *Theologia* (Fortress, 1983), 29–48.

14 Farley, 7.

15 Farley, 11.

16 "Statement of Faith," *Fuller Theological Seminary Catalog 1992–1993,* 6.

Toward Holistic Church/Seminary Relations

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revelation out of which the Church is privileged to live, and of which she is at once learner and teacher.

■ **THE SPIRIT HAS GIVEN THE SPECIAL GIFT OF TEACHING TO ENABLE THE CHURCH'S DISCIPLINED LEARNING AND TEACHING OF THE TREASURE OF GOD'S REVELATION.** We are not at all clear as to how exactly to understand the gifts of the Spirit who, Jesus promised, would direct the future of the Church by keeping it "in touch" with the past word of Jesus. In particular, what is the relationship between natural ability and special gifts? Whatever the answer, faith knows that all which is good is a gift from God. The New Testament makes clear that just as the people of God have received the gift of the divine Word, so has the Body of Christ received divine gifts for interpreting that Word — especially here, the gift of teaching. The theological school (at best!) is a place and symbol of gifted reflection on the Word of God in itself, as well as the reflection on *past* reflection on that Word in the life and history of the Church. In all of this it is a symbol of the gift more widely distributed to the people of God in every place.

■ **SPIRIT-GUIDED INTERPRETATIONS OF THE WORD OF GOD ARE NOT ONLY A GIFT OF THE SPIRIT TO A LOCAL CHURCH AT A POINT IN TIME, BUT ALSO TO THE WHOLE CHURCH IN ALL THE WORLD THROUGH SUCCEEDING GENERATIONS.** As the Church universal, the Body of Christ, has sought to learn, obey, and teach the rich revelation of God. In its spiritual and cultural diversity, it has generated a rich body of material. This corpus is subordinate to the (normative) scriptural revelation of God; nonetheless, in its rich extension in space and time it ever stands alongside current and local understanding and interpretation as a rich and usable gift of the Spirit. Thus — and here again, at best — in a very particular way, in its library and in its learned and gifted faculty devoted to understanding those many voices which speak in the name of Jesus, the theological school is a symbol of the work of the Spirit extending beyond time and geography. The seminary is a symbol of the many tongues by and cultures in which the Spirit has spoken. To be sure, the symbol's authenticity is always contingent upon its readiness to listen to the normative voice in and through which the Spirit has spoken the Word of God to all tongues and cultures.

CONCLUSION

The essential point to be made here is this: There was a reason that the churches, in all kinds of circumstances, formed seminaries or theological schools. Evidently, the seminary is a symbol of something which is very important to and for the church.

Symbols are important, and play a vital role in the life of an organization. To be sure, symbols may be multivalent, but they typically have a central meaning around which the other meanings cluster. Symbols can become tarnished with age, their meaning distorted; they can also lose their meaning. But symbols can also be restored to their former place and meaningfulness, so that they once again guard and promote the truth they embodied in the beginning.

The truth is that the seminary is a child of the church — a child that the church wanted, and now needs. But it is also true that the seminary needs the church — and is an adequate symbol only as long as it seeks to link its life to the universal Body of Christ. ■

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become less competitive and more collaborative, more oriented around the ministry of the whole people of God and not just those who have specialist contributions to make. Otherwise we will not produce people with collegial and inclusive attitudes, qualities embodied in the "Tomorrow's Church" group.

A final word: Students come looking to be filled with greater spiritual understanding and depth, as well as with the necessary theological knowledge and fundamental ministry skills, and in our various documents and advertisements we promise to deliver this. But, as the group's findings demonstrate, it is those who go away with a greater spiritual hunger, with a greater hunger for theological understanding of life, and hunger for greater reality in their ministry, who will most shape the church of the future. How do we teach students to become more hungry for God when, at the same time, we are filling them with so much knowledge? How do we leave them with a theological hunger for more understanding when we infer that completing their degrees prepares them for ministry? How do we help them develop a hunger for greater reality in ministry and in the church when we are often so removed from the everyday life of either? If we can find answers to these questions, then we will do justice to the challenge contained in the "Tommorow's Church" report. ■